

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy

Joshua Tree National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE





Centennial Strategy

Vision Statement

The National Park Service at Joshua Tree National Park preserves and protects the natural and cultural resources of a representative area of both the Colorado and Mojave deserts for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The park strives to maintain its rich biological and geological diversity, cultural history, recreational resources, and outstanding opportunities for scientific study.

By 2016, working through partnerships with surrounding communities, Joshua Tree National Park is recognized by Southern Californians as a National Treasure worth preserving and protecting. Actions are being taken to protect the park's resources and continue its connectivity with other natural areas. Adjacent municipalities frequently consult with park staff on short- and long-range plans.

The values of park preservation captured in the Organic Act have been instilled in the burgeoning and diverse population of Southern California. The urban interface on the north and south boundaries of the park is cohesively planned with open space and ecological corridors maintained as appropriate.

Joshua Tree National Park's natural and cultural resources, as well as the historic resources of California's "forgotten gold rush" and mining and homesteading eras are preserved and interpreted to park visitors and in schools, regional museums, and art galleries. The story of human influence on the desert and the desert's shaping of various cultures is interpreted.

Joshua Tree National Park is the leader in alternative energy production for all land management agencies in the western United States. Accomplishments at the Center for Arid Land Restoration, with solar-power generation, and with energy conservation are used as national examples.

Joshua Tree National Park is considered the developmental institution for dedicated and talented employees, from which future National Park Service leaders emerge.

Curt Sauer, Superintendent

Stewardship

Objective: Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Performance Goal: Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

The primary historic-structure assets at Keys Ranch, Queen Valley, and Lost Horse Mine will have completed stabilization plans by 2011. Rehabilitation projects will have improved the condition of those assets to “good,” as demonstrated by the Facility Condition Index, by 2015. The park will enter into an historic preservation partnership with surrounding communities to encourage the preservation of historic structures.

Performance Goal: Restore native habitats by controlling exotic species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Native habitats will be restored in 50 percent of disturbed landscapes (as measured in 2007) through revegetation with native plants and landform modeling to reduce exotic species.

Performance Goal: Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

By 2016, 75 percent of the high priority facility assets at Joshua Tree National Park will be in “good” condition as measured by the Facility Condition Index. The park’s historic and natural assets associated with developed areas will be entered into the Facility Management Software System by 2012.

Performance Goal: Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

The park will implement monitoring for 10 of the 26 network-wide vital signs.

Performance Goal: Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

The park will complete cultural resource inventories to meet current Department of Interior standards for developed sites and surrounding landscapes by 2014.

Objective: Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Performance Goal: Other

The park will acquire 50 percent of the remaining non-federal lands within its boundary by 2012.

Environmental Leadership

Objective: Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Performance Goal: Reduce environmental impacts of park operation on air and water quality.

The park will implement a program that achieves a carbon neutral footprint at its headquarters complex for National Park Service activities by 2010.

Objective: Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Performance Goal: Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

Joshua Tree National Park will be recognized as the leader in renewable energy production among land management agencies. The park will reduce non-renewable energy consumption by two percent each year between 2008 and 2016.

By 2016, 100 percent of the electricity used at the park will come from renewable sources. This will be achieved through partnerships with public utility companies and corporations, as well as federal, state, and city agencies.

Objective: Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Performance Goal: Other

Working with surrounding communities, the park will identify feasible wildlife corridors and "open space" to preserve and protect Morongo Basin's habitat and quality of life.

Recreational Experience

Objective: Encourage and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Performance Goal: Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

By 2009 the park will have completed a comprehensive assessment and implementation plan to address universal accessibility for trails, campgrounds, and facilities. By 2016, with guidance and assistance from corporate and private partners, visitor satisfaction with universally-accessible park facilities will have increased by 50 percent.

Performance Goal: Other

By 2009 Joshua Tree National Park and the City of Twentynine Palms will conduct a design workshop to explore options for renovating the inadequate and minimally accessible Oasis Visitor Center. By 2010 the park will submit a project proposal to renovate, in partnership with local, state, and federal stakeholders, this facility.

Objective: Establish “volun-tourism” excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Performance Goal: Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

The park will increase participation in its volunteer program by five percent each year between 2008 and 2012. By 2010 the park will establish a science program designed to increase environmental stewardship and to promote our understanding of park resources and staffed by “citizen scientists.”

Performance Goal: Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children’s lives.

(see education section)

Recreational Experience

Objective: Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Performance Goal: Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

By 2014 the park will complete the design and construction of a state of the art, universally accessible, visitor center at Cottonwood Spring, engaging an increased visitor population from the Coachella Valley.

By 2010 the park will develop a partnership plan with the Town of Yucca Valley to rehabilitate the Black Rock Campground and Education Center complex. The complex will serve as a primary destination within the Morongo Basin for visitors, educators, students, and equestrian groups as envisioned in the design documents completed in 2006.

By 2015 the rehabilitated Black Rock complex will be providing a level of visitor services that enhance tourism efforts throughout the Morongo Basin.

Education

Objective: Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Performance Goal: Other

The park education program, serving regional students in grades K-12, will be expanded from its current 18,000 annual students to 30,000 by 2012. Education services will also expand geographically, to include school audiences in Morongo Basin, Coachella Valley, Inland Empire, and Victor Valley/High Desert.

By 2015 the existing day-use education program will be augmented by establishment of a residential “science camp,” which will be operated in partnership with other educational entities.

The Desert Institute adult extension program, part of the Joshua Tree National Park Association, will also operate from these new facilities thereby dramatically improving services to its clientele.

Objective: Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Performance Goal: Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

In the Mojave Desert Inventory and Monitoring Network, the park will create a “citizen science” website where visitors can learn about and register for participation in natural resource fieldwork. The site will allow registered users to contribute additional inventory and monitoring data derived from their activities as “citizen scientists.”

A series of downloadable self-guiding tours using GPS location information and other technologies will be developed to provide park visitors with optional ways of experiencing the park. Tours will be customized to appeal to different age-groups and audiences.

The park will complete work on a web-hosted photo gallery where the public can download high-resolution, public-domain images of park resources. Visitors will be encouraged to contribute their own digital photos of Joshua Tree National Park to this online collection.

Education

Objective: Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Performance Goal: Other

Park interpretive media including exhibits, signs, publications, audiovisual and electronic media will meet service standards by 2014 and will offer dynamic media experiences that fully engage and inspire park audiences.

By 2012 the park will fully implement the Keys Ranch Management Plan and provide an experience where visitors of all generations can learn about the ingenuity and inventiveness of desert pioneers. Keys Ranch will include a variety of restored operating equipment that will show how all generations of a frontier family contributed to survival in the uncompromising desert landscape. Important lessons on adaptations to the desert and sustainable desert living will provide compelling lessons for modern life in desert environments.

By 2010 the park will establish, in cooperation with network parks, a research and learning center affiliated with local colleges and universities. This Desert Science & Heritage Center will integrate a broad range of field research and data collection studies with park-sponsored education initiatives encompassing kindergarten through senior age levels.

Professional Excellence

Objective: Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Performance Goal: Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

The park will establish an outreach committee that will have a plan in place by 2009 to recruit from under-served populations. By 2010 a recruitment and retention program will be in place with staff routinely assigned to organized recruitment events. Funding for these efforts will be taken off the top of each year's budget.

Performance Goal: Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.

By 2012 Joshua Tree National Park will be considered in the 90th percentile nationally in the areas of employee safety, employee wellness, employee development, and succession management planning. All employees will work in a positive learning environment and will have opportunities to improve their skills and for career development through training and special job assignments. Park decision processes will incorporate multiple opportunities for non-management staff involvement and engagement.

Objective: Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

Performance Goal: Other

A park planning branch will be established to coordinate Centennial Act strategies and to support the park's continuing efforts in community and region based environmental stewardship.

Performance Goal: Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

The park will promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors. By 2009 park operations will be evaluated annually to assess and reduce risk to park employees and visitors. A job hazard analysis will have been completed for each activity with a risk rating of moderate or higher. Each year park staff will be provided with comprehensive safety and wellness training. All new staff will be provided with comprehensive park orientation and an introduction to Operational Risk Management.
